



Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Management/Maintenance Job Sheet Kentucky

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

November 2001

DEFINITION

This job sheet provides management and maintenance requirements for land under a general or continuous CRP contract. This information is considered to be part of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) contract. Refer to information on the CRP-1 form for the applicable contract period.

CRP and CREP program rules include specific guidance regarding how vegetative cover should be managed both during and after the establishment period. The following outlines this guidance:

MANAGEMENT DURING THE ESTABLISHMENT PERIOD:

The appropriate NRCS job sheet should be referenced for information on proper practice establishment. The establishment period begins immediately following planting and continues until NRCS signs the final status review indicating successful practice implementation. This period should normally extend one or two growing seasons beyond the planting date.

During this establishment period, control of excessive weedy competition is important. To control competing vegetation, top clipping of planted grasslands may be done as needed until the stand is determined by NRCS to be fully established. Mowing heights should be as high as possible and should not be lower than 8 inches. Chemical control can also be used anytime during the establishment period. All herbicides must be used according to label recommendations.

Mowing between tree/shrub rows may also be done as needed until the stand is determined by NRCS to be fully established. Herbicide applications on woody vegetation must be

according to Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF) recommendations. Consult with a KDF forester for recommendations prior to applying herbicide on woody vegetation established under a CRP or CREP contract.

MANAGEMENT AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT PERIOD:

The guidance below applies on CRP and CREP acreage after the planned cover is determined by NRCS to be fully established. Refer to the NRCS "final" status review to determine when NRCS has rendered this determination.

When the stand is determined to be fully established, the following guidance applies:

1. No annual mowing or disking of an entire field or the same portion of a field for generic weed control and/or for cosmetic purposes. (An area may be mowed or disked only once during a two-year period.)
2. Areas between tree/shrub rows may be mowed only once during a two-year period.
3. No haying or grazing operations except in certain emergencies as authorized by USDA Farm Service Agency.
4. All mowing and/or disking operations shall cease during the period between May 15 and July 15 in order to avoid interference with grassland bird nesting activities.
5. Harvesting timber on contract acreage is not allowed during the contract period.
6. Control of undesirable plants (such as Johnsongrass, Kudzu, Thistles, Multiflora Rose), noxious species, insects, and other pests to a level that prevents adverse impacts to surrounding lands is allowed at any time if herbicides are the sole control method.

7. Mowing, disking, herbicide applications and/or prescribed burning are not required as long as an approved cover as determined by NRCS is maintained.

The participant is responsible for maintaining the established practices according to the CRP or CREP conservation plan throughout the contract period. This responsibility includes excluding livestock and controlling soil erosion along with controlling diseases, insects, undesirable plants, and noxious weeds to a level that does not adversely affect the long-term sustainability of the established species or that poses offsite drift problems. The participant should make periodic checks of the enrolled acreage to assure that all practices are functioning properly.

Additional Management Alternatives For Areas Established To Grassland

It is recommended to delay mowing and strip disking until after August 15 to further enhance wildlife habitat, but this is not required.

A. Mowing

Strip Mowing: Mow one-third of the field in strips (once annually). Mowing of the field should be completed by mowing strips that are a minimum of 30 feet and a maximum of 50 feet wide, then skipping an area between 60 and 100 feet in width. This spacing will establish a pattern whereby the mowed strips are separated by two unmowed strips that are one and two years old.

Mowing Half. Mow one-half of the field once the first year and mow the other half the second year. Continue this two year rotation.

Mowing All. Mow the entire field (one time) every two years.

B. Strip Disking (No strip disking of filter strips, riparian buffers, grassed waterways, contour buffers or areas planted to trees and/or shrubs.)

Specific guidelines for strip disking in Kentucky on CRP and CREP acreage are as follows:

1. CRP participants may perform light disking on grassland fields that are at least four

years old. An area may not be disked more than once in a two year period.

2. Strip disking of the field should be completed by lightly disking strips that are a minimum of 30 feet and a maximum of 50 feet wide, then skipping an area between 60 and 100 feet in width. This spacing will establish a pattern whereby the disked strips are separated by two undisked strips that are one and two years old.
3. Strip disking should be planned for the least erosive parts of fields and not in places where gully formation is a problem.

Note: Disking in the late fall on highly erosive sites may cause erosion to occur over the winter months.

4. Strip disking operations shall be performed along field contours as nearly as practical.
5. Strips shall be lightly disked to leave a minimum of 30 percent residue remaining on the soil after disking operations are complete.

C. Prescribed Burning (Native Grass Only)

Prescribed burning of native grasses may be done once every three years. Prescribed burning is not allowed on filter strips, riparian buffers, grassed waterways, contour buffers or on areas planted to trees and/or shrubs.

A written prescribed burn plan must be prepared in advance of the prescribed burn by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR). The participant will be responsible for adhering to the KDFWR burn plan and all local and state laws applicable to open burning in Kentucky.

D. Combinations of Mowing, Strip Disking, and Prescribed Burning

Combinations of these management alternatives are acceptable provided the same acreage is not mowed, disked, and/or burned more than once during a two-year period. (Example: The same acreage can not be mowed one year and burned the next.)